

■ BLACKWATER HERITAGE STATE TRAIL

Milton, Florida



Over the past 100 years, the U.S. Navy Railroad Spur Line has played a major part in the economy of Milton, Florida. First, it was part of the historic Florida and Alabama Railroad. Then it served military operations during World War II. In 1993, after it was declared surplus by the U. S. Navy, the Federal Lands to Parks Program transferred the railroad to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. With the program's help, the state of Florida converted this surplus railroad into the Blackwater Heritage State Trail, an 8.5-mile long scenic corridor. Blackwater is a multi-purpose trail, offering accessible hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and other outdoor recreational experiences as it meanders through both urban and rural areas. Crossing over several creeks, the trail provides a unique opportunity to observe the American alligator, Florida pine snake, river otter, bobcat, red-headed woodpecker, native wildflower meadows, and white-topped pitcher plants. State park officials estimate that the trail contributes \$3 million a year to the local economy.

